

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Sickles.

DELEGATE SICKLES: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I feel like the old Chinese proverb that says, "In his decision, the judge with seven reasons usually gives only one", so I am not going to bore you with many reasons for the position I personally have held for a long time, but perhaps pick out one that has not been touched yet, one that I think if there are any left in the house who have not made their mind up, they might think about for just a minute.

Some few years ago I became involved in the national problem of juvenile delinquency. You might wonder why I would bring up juvenile delinquency when I am going to be in favor of lowering the voting age because you should normally assume I would then be talking about bad children and there would be a good argument against lowering the voting age.

Well, as I studied this part of the problem with the so-called experts in the field, that body of our society that spends all its time studying those in that age group, without any exception, their conclusion was that those from about seventeen and a half up, as a class, certainly had the maturity to make the value judgment necessary to cast a vote in an election.

We, of course, are relying upon our personal experiences. I could add to that, that in my travels throughout the State of Maryland I have been impressed by the judgment shown by youngsters in the State, and I have suggested many times to those who were eighteen or nineteen who thought maybe they were not ready to vote yet, that they might expect they are going to become smarter. They may learn more facts, but this does not necessarily add anything to their basic wisdom because I think the educators in this hall will testify to the fact that the younger a child is educated and trained — at least this is the current theory — the better off we are in terms of instilling a basic education in him.

As a result, the Head Start program on the national level tried to lift the youngsters at an early age even before pre-school age and the whole school system is based on the concept that the youngster and his talents are nurtured and his character is developed at a very early age.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have one-quarter minute, Delegate Sickles.

DELEGATE SICKLES: Let us hope we are not being tempered by something as I

was. I was recently given a copy of a document known as "Watch for these Signals of Creeping Middle-Age". It goes through a list. One signal which I noticed, which hit me right between the eyes, was that it occurs to you that the campaigns to elect younger men to public office may have gotten out of hand lately. I think maybe there is a touch of that with respect to those of us who have passed the magic age of twenty-one.

Let me suggest to you it would be good for our society to take those who have the maturity and judgment necessary to vote, and let them vote, and let them participate in decisions we are making.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss.

DELEGATE KOSS: Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield three minutes to Delegate Borom.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Borom.

DELEGATE BOROM: Mr. Chairman and fellow delegates, I am sorry Delegate Dulany has left. He made reference some time ago to fermentation when we talked about the younger voters. I would say to him and to the delegates here that without fermentation there is no wine. I am afraid what we are trying to do here if we vote against lowering the voting age is removing the fermentation, and we will have a neutral liquid or bland liquid. I would say this.

Delegate Schloeder and other educators made reference to their experience with students. I have also had experience with students, particularly student governments, whether they be leaders or followers in student government. The one thing they do not want is a Mickey Mouse operation. They do not want to be involved in something that is artificial. Therefore, I submit that any figures or statistics they offer in reference to the students active in student government are completely invalid.

Those less than twenty-one years old in our State are interested in being in the middle of something that is vital and alive; our political system, our state government, is a live, vital instrument, and the youngsters want to be involved.

For those of you who fear that permitting young people to be involved in politics is likely to lead to the situation in Italy and some other countries, I do not think you have anything to fear. I think the fear here is that if we continue not permitting youngsters under twenty-one to be involved vitally in our state government, we enhance